

PLATTSBURGH AIR FORCE BASE,
TARGET INTELLIGENCE TRAINING BUILDING/
COMBAT CENTER
(Plattsburgh Air Force Base, Building No. 2008)
Connecticut Road
Plattsburgh
Clinton County
New York

HAER No. NY-326-BE

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

National Park Service
Northeast Region
Philadelphia Support Office
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Location: Connecticut Road, Plattsburgh, Clinton County, New York

UTM: 18.622240.4946400
Quad: Plattsburgh, NY-VT, 1:24,000 (1966)

Date of Construction: 1958

Architect: Unknown

Present Owner: United States Air Force

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: Building No. 2008 was used to train Strategic Air Command (SAC) aircrews to identify targets and develop various skills required for bombing procedures. The building contained Emergency War Plans (EWP) and Combat Mission Folders (CMF), which held orders to be carried out in case of war, including flight paths, rendezvous points, codes, enemy air-defensive data, and targets.

Project Information: Building No. 2008 at Plattsburgh Air Force Base (AFB) is being documented in accordance with HAER standards to mitigate for the potential adverse effects of transferring deed of title to the property from federal ownership. The property transfer is a result of the disposal and reuse of Plattsburgh AFB, pursuant to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1993. The mitigation is a stipulation of a Programmatic Agreement (PA) among the U.S. Air Force, the New York State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (October 2000).

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Summary Description of Target Intelligence Training Building/Combat Center (Building No. 2008)

Layout

Building No. 2008 is a flat-roofed, one-story, reinforced concrete block structure, faced with brick veneer on its north, east and west facades; on the south façade, the concrete block is left exposed. It is irregular in plan and rests atop a concrete foundation. The main portion of the building measures 121 feet 4 inches by 67 feet. To its south is a slightly lower offset measuring roughly 26 feet by 37 feet. All window openings have been in-filled with brick. A new security door was added in 1965 and both the interior and exterior were repainted in 1981 (US Army Corps of Engineers, 1981). The roofline of the west (rear) and north portions of the building is approximately 2 feet higher than that of the southern (front) part.

The original layout of Building No. 2008 is a mirror image of Building 2010. The double entry doors on the front (east) elevation are sheltered under a small, flat canopy, near the left (south) end of the middle section, which is set back from the north and south ends. The rear (west) elevation has double doors at the right (south) end of the middle section, with louvered vents near the top at either side. Electrical equipment is grouped within a chain-link fence toward the southern end. Equipment is also sheltered behind a wood fence in the corner formed between the middle section and southern offset of the building. The southern elevation consists of the middle section, set back, on the left (west), with the electrical equipment in front and the southern offset to the right (east), with the name "Combat Center" on the wall at the upper right, under the edge of the roof. The north elevation consists of the northern offset, projecting into the foreground, on the left (east), and the main section of the building to the right (west). A single steel door with no handle or lock on the exterior is in the main section directly below the roof ridge.

Building No. 2008 included a vault in which EWP and CMF orders were kept, as well as an EWP War Room, an operational intelligence room, study areas, offices, and storage space. It provided facilities for strategic bomber and air refueling crews in the techniques of target materials and radar photography for identifying targets and other natural or cultural features. It also provided facilities for instruction in the use of Bomb/Nav systems for the guidance of aircraft to the bomb release line or airborne launch points. The building provided space for individual crew study rooms for the study of target and combat mission folders and area studies; classrooms for instruction in the use of air target materials and radar photography, radar and photo interpretation, and terrain analysis; a specialized instruction and briefing room for large groups; a reference library for target intelligence data; storage for classified material up to and including Top Secret; and administration and instruction offices. It served as the Combat Center and was used for receiving, distributing, and implementing combat mission plans and processing top-secret information.

Alterations/Additions

Within Building No. 2008, there were areas wherein highly classified EWP and CMF materials were housed. As such, it was essential to the security of the base that such areas were secured at all times.

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Accordingly, steel "safe" doors were installed at locations such as the vestibule entry into the large storage vault (photograph BE-10) and the plans administration room (photograph BE-12). Over the course of time, airmen who were required to spend extended periods of "waiting" time in Building No. 2008 decorated these doors with painted emblems of varying symbolism. In photograph BE-10, one of the two steel safe doors bears the inscription DOXE, the acronym for the Directorate of Exercises; below, the Soviet red star erupts into a nuclear mushroom cloud, while a long-range bomber and two fighter aircraft radiate out from the blast site. Finally, symbolizing the absolute seriousness the airmen gave their mission, a white peace dove bearing an olive branch flies by the mushroom cloud. On the other door, the mission of the 380th Bombardment Wing (BMW) is symbolized by the compass establishing crosshairs on the communist hammer and sickle, while an olive branch is superimposed over the wheel of the compass, that part of the instrument that would ultimately determine where a nuclear device would be dropped.

In photograph BE-11, the mission of Target Intelligence is symbolized on one of the safe doors by the shield of the 380th BMW, with the Soviet Red Star and communist sickle and hammer superimposed over it. In photograph BE-12, a safe door into a Combat Intelligence vault bears an insignia of the Soviet Union—the very source from which the intelligence materials stored within the vault was derived. At the center of the insignia the communist sickle and hammer is superimposed over the Soviet Red Star. Within the arms of the star, the sword and rifle of revolution are crossed. The Russian lettering encircling the sickle and hammer spells out "October Revolution."

Other than the window in-filling, the 1981 painting, and the door art described above, there have been no major alterations or additions made to Building No. 2008.

Function

Building No. 2008 was designed and built to provide training space for aircrew activities associated with the SAC mission. The building was also used as a center for receiving and processing combat mission plans and for top-secret information processing.

Significance

The end of World War II saw the beginning of hostile relations between the Soviet Union and the United States, based on differing social, economic, and political views. As this "Cold War" escalated, the United States instituted a policy of containment, which called for a "peaceful" blocking of the expansion of Soviet political and economic influence. Nuclear weapons, which had also developed at the end of World War II, held a significant place in this conflict, but it was theorized that an American nuclear capability, if strong enough, could deter unwanted soviet expansion.

On March 21, 1946, SAC was organized as one of the three new major commands in a reorganized Army Air Force. SAC was considered the "big stick" of U.S. National military strength, and was given the responsibility of delivering the atomic weapons. With the motto "Peace is our Profession" SAC was the physical realization of America's deterrence theory.

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The newly established Air Force (established in 1947) embarked upon an expansive Cold War building program to make SAC operable. Air Force bases designated specifically for SAC were identified (or newly constructed) and became the critical instrument in SAC's mission of posing a significant deterrent to enemy aggression. Specially designed, mission-specific facilities were constructed at each of these installations. At Plattsburgh AFB, one of these was the Target Intelligence Training Building/Combat Center. Building No. 2008 at Plattsburgh AFB was constructed in 1958 to support and enhance the SAC weapons delivery mission. It was an essential part of Plattsburgh AFB Cold War era activities and a critical element of SAC bomber operations.

Drawings

Copies of as-built drawings for the Target Intelligence Building/Combat Center, Building No. 2008, are archived at:

Air Force Historical Research Agency/ISA
600 Chennault Circle
Maxwell Air Force Base, AL 36112-6424

Sources

Tetra Tech, Inc.

1995 *Survey of Cold War-Era Buildings and Structures at Plattsburgh Air Force Base, Clinton County, New York.* Prepared for the U.S. Department of the Air Force, Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence, Brooks Air Force Base, Texas.

United States Air Force

1959 Plattsburgh Air Force Base Real Property Accountable Record (1959-1989).

United States Air Force

1991 *Peace...is our Profession: Alert Operations and the Strategic Air Command, 1957-1991.* Office of the Historian, Headquarters Strategic Air Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska.

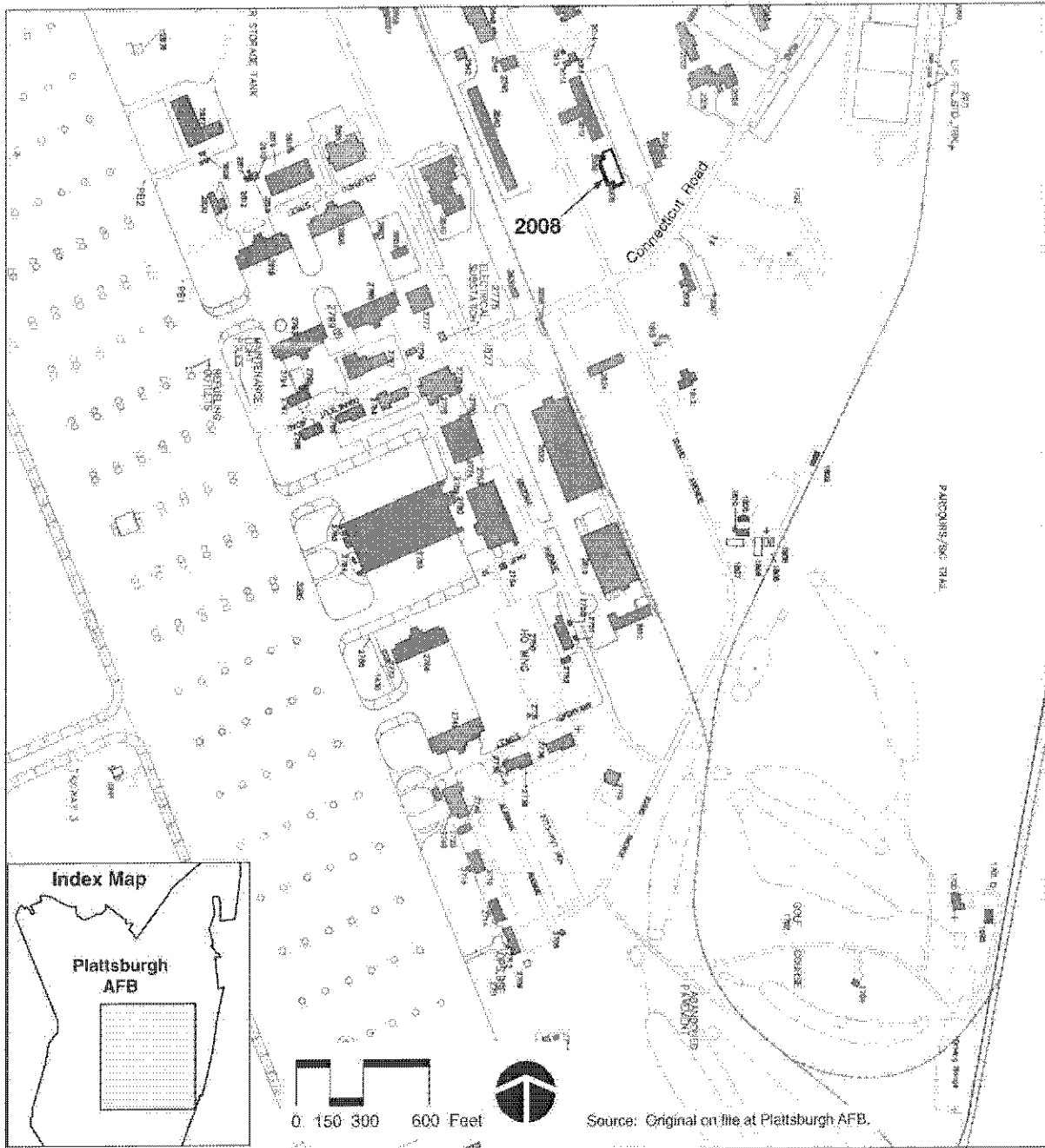
United States Air Force

2000 Plattsburgh Air Force Base Real Property Inventory Detail List.

U.S. Department of the Air Force, Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence

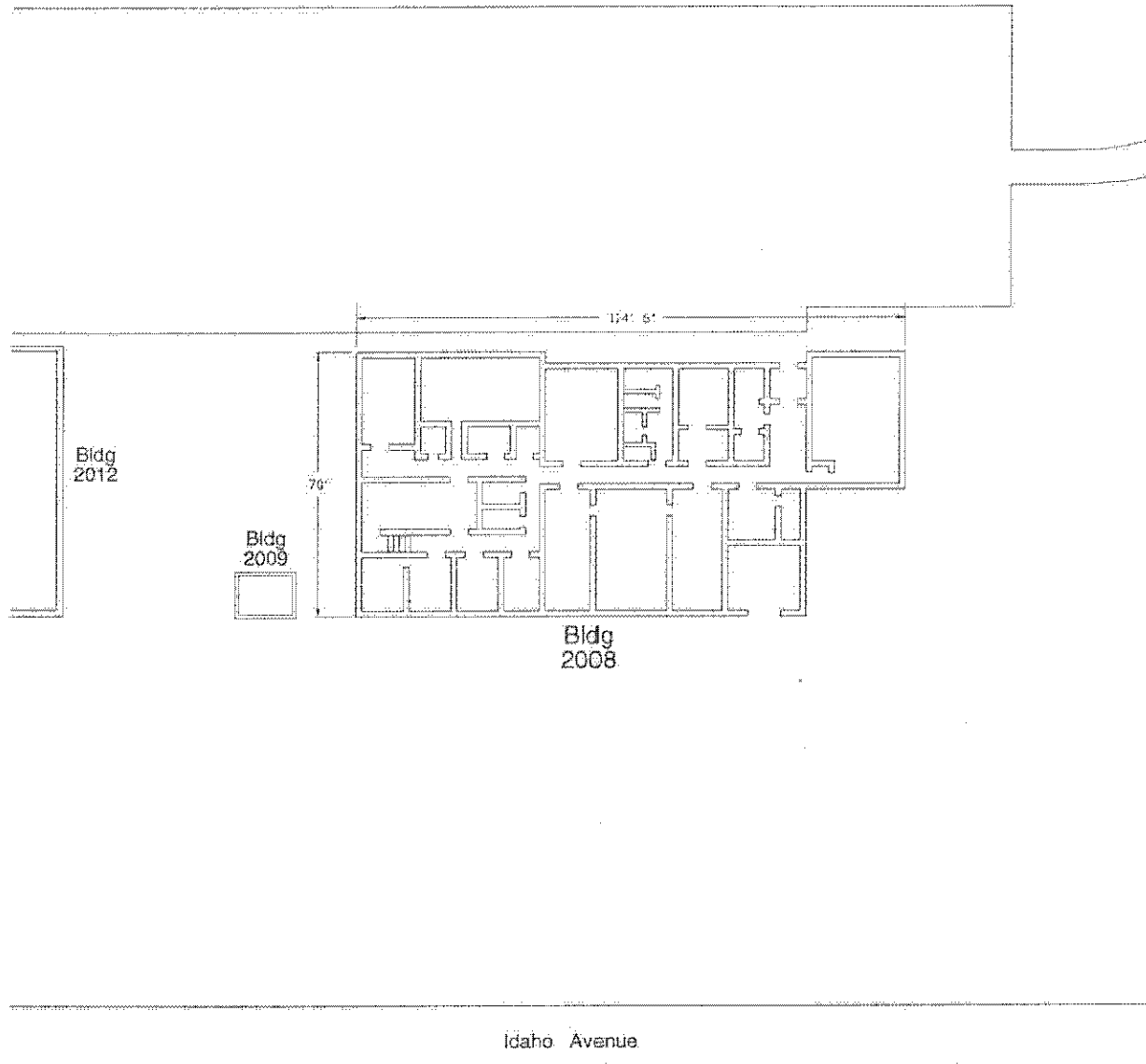
1998 *Draft Historic Building Inventory and Evaluation Plattsburgh Air Force Base New York.* Volumes I and II, June.

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Location Map for Target Intelligence Training Building/Combat Center, Building No. 2008
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Sketch not to Scale

SKETCH PLAN - TARGET INTELLIGENCE TRAINING BUILDING/COMBAT CENTER
(Plattsburgh Air Force Base, Building No. 2008)
(Source: Plattsburgh AFB CAD File, Prepared by the United States Air Force, ca 2000)
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